



August 25, 2006

Dear Friends:

I want to thank the approximately 100 people who joined in a community meeting that I convened on Monday, August 21st at Arlington High School in St. Paul to discuss important issues facing K-12 education. I was pleased to be joined by a distinguished panel that included Dr. Meria Carstarphen, Superintendent, St. Paul Schools; Hon. Elona Street-Stewart, Chair, St. Paul Board of Education; and Mary Cathryn Ricker, President, St. Paul Federation of Teachers to discuss these important issues, including what works and what does not work with the *No Child Left Behind Act*. Congress is preparing to reauthorize the law in 2007, and the House Education and Workforce Committee will begin holding a series of hearings when Congress returns to Washington in September. I will hold more education meetings in the Fourth District this fall to hear directly from parents, teachers and administrators about the issues that impact the education of our children.

This week, Governor Tim Pawlenty sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Transportation adding his voice to those of us in Congress expressing concern over the proposed \$2.5 billion federal loan to Dakota, Minnesota and Eastern (DM&E) Railroad for an expansion to accommodate high speed coal and hazmat trains. I am pleased that the governor understands the potential impact of this proposal on the city of Rochester and the Mayo Clinic. Asking taxpayers to provide an unsecured \$2.5 billion loan to the DM&E, a company found to be "a poor credit risk" by the independent firm Bearing Point, is irresponsible and should not be approved. Our nation is spending hundreds of billions of dollars to fight wars in Iraq and Afghanistan while federal budget deficits are adding trillions of dollars of debt on the backs of our children. Gambling unprecedented public funds on a risky railroad scheme that will profit politically connected business executives and leave hard working taxpayers with all the risk is bad public policy and bad business.



Rep. McCollum joins the crew at *WomenBuild* along with Site Supervisor Tara Lumley. *WomenBuild*, a Habitat for Humanity International program that encourages women and girls to have fun and make a difference by building affordable homes and communities, has been working on renovating this triplex this summer.

Sincerely,

Congresswoman Betty McCollum
Serving Minnesota's Fourth Congressional District

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